

Thomas Jefferson to Gouverneur Morris, October 15, 1792 , from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE U. S. MINISTER TO FRANCE J. MSS. (GOUVERNEUR MORRIS)

Philadelphia Oct 15, 1792.

Sir, —I have duly received your favor of July 10, No. 4, but no other No, preceding or subsequent. I fear therefore the some miscarriage has taken place. The present goes to Bordeaux under cover to Mr. Fenwick who I hope will be able to give it a safe conveyance to Du. I observe that you say in your letter the “the maine department is to treat with you for supplies to S. Domingo.” I presume you mean “supplies of *money*” and, not that our government is to furnish supplies of *provisions* &c. specifically, or employ others to do it: this being a business into which they could not enter. The payment of money here to be employed by *their own agents* in purchasing the produce of our soil is a desirable thing.— We are informed by the public papers that the late constitution of France, formally notified to us, is suspended, and a new Convention called. During the time of this suspension, & while no legitimate government exists, we apprehend we cannot continue the payments of our debt to France, because there is no person authorized to receive it, and to give us an unobjectionable acquittal. You are therefore desired to consider the paiment as suspended until further orders. Should circumstances oblige you to mention this (which it is better to avoid if you can) do it with such solid reasons as will occur to yourself & accompany it with the most friendly declarations that the suspension does not proceed from any wish in us to delay the

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payment, the contrary being our wish, nor from any desire to embarrass or oppose the settlement of their government in that way in which their nation shall desire it: but from our anxiety to pay this debt justly & honorably, and to the persons really authorized by the nation (to whom we owe it) to receive it for their use. Nor shall this suspension be continued one moment after we can see our way clear out of the difficulty into which their situation has thrown us. That they may speedily obtain liberty, peace & tranquillity is our sincere prayer. * * *